



Guide to Conservation Programs for Wisconsin Landowners

Created by Wisconsin Land & Water
Conservation Association

This document provides a quick reference to federal, state and local cost-share conservation programs in Wisconsin. The programs listed may not be available in all counties. To see if a program is available or for more details, please check with the agency listed as the contact.

Conservation Reserve Program and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

Purpose: CRP and CREP reduce erosion, increase wildlife habitat, improve water quality and increase forestland.

Description: Landowner or operator sets aside cropland (or pasture that is adjacent to surface water) with annual rental payments through the contract period. Cost-sharing for the practice installation is provided as well as other incentives.

Practices: Tree planting, grass cover, small wetland restoration, prairie and oak savannah restoration and others.

Eligibility: Varies by soil type and crop history. Land is accepted into program if land meets eligibility criteria. Continuous signup open for buffers, waterways, and environmental practices. Periodic signups announced throughout the year for other practices.

Contract: 10 to 15 years. Transferable with change in ownership. Under CREP there is an option for a perpetual conservation easement.

Public Access: Not required.

Contact: FSA, NRCS, LCD

Conservation Security Program (CSP)

Purpose: To provide payments to producers who practice good stewardship on their land and to provide incentives to install additional conservation practices.

Eligibility: Agricultural operations located within the selected watersheds are eligible. Applicant must have an active interest in the operation and show control of the land for the life of the contract.

Contract: Payment contracts are for 5-10 years depending on tier and enrollment category. Payments are determined by the tier of participation and enhancements.

Public Access: Not required.

Contact: NRCS

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Purpose: To provide financial and technical assistance to farmers to install or implement structural and management practices on agricultural lands.

Practices: Many practices are eligible for cost-sharing. Contact your local NRCS office for details or visit www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov.

Eligibility: All private land in agricultural production is eligible; includes cropland, pastureland

and non-industrial private forest. Funds are directed to projects that offer the greatest environmental benefits.

Contract: 1-10 year contracts. Producers may be eligible for up to 50 and 75% cost-share, up to \$10,000 annually and up to \$450,000 cap per producer for the life of the Farm Bill.

Public Access: Not required.

Contact: NRCS

Farmland and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)

Purpose: To maintain prime farmland in agricultural uses through agricultural conservation easements.

Description: Program provides funding for a one-time payment for an easement to state, tribal, or local government programs to purchase development rights on prime agricultural land.

Eligibility: Land must be part of a pending offer for purchase or development rights from a local, state or tribal program, have a conservation plan, and meet other criteria on size and location to support long-term agricultural production.

Contract: Permanent easement limiting use of the land to agricultural purposes. USDA offers up to 50% of the fair market value of the conservation easement.

Public Access: Not required.

Contact: NRCS

(Wisconsin) Farmland Preservation Program (FPP)

Purpose: To help preserve farmland through local planning and zoning, promote soil and water conservation, and provide tax relief to participating landowners.

Description: Landowners qualify if their land is in an exclusively agricultural zoning district or if they sign an agreement to use their land exclusively for agricultural purposes.

Practices: As required in the conservation plan developed with the county Land Conservation Department to comply with county soil and water conservation standards.

Eligibility: Landowner must be a Wisconsin resident, own at least 35 contiguous acres or more and produce gross farm profits of \$6000 in the previous year.

Public Access: Not required.

Contact: LCD, DATCP, ZO

Land & Water Resource Management (LWRM) Plan Implementation

Purpose: To conserve long-term soil productivity, the quality of related natural resources, enhance water quality, and focus on severe erosion problems.

Description: Cost-share and technical assistance to landowners to install soil and water conservation practices.

Eligibility: Determined by individual Land Conservation Committees and Departments. Generally 70% cost-share.

Contract: Through a cost-share agreement.

Public Access: Not required.

Contact: LCD, DATCP

Partners for Fish & Wildlife

Purpose: Restoration of wetlands, grasslands and threatened and endangered species habitats.

Description: Up to 100% cost-share provided to restore wildlife habitat on private lands.

Eligibility: Land which can be restored to wetland conditions. Degraded or former grasslands that can be restored. Land that can be restored to provide habitat for threatened and

endangered species.

Contract: 10 years.

Public Access: Not required.

Contact: FWS

Targeted Runoff Management (TRM) Grants

Purpose: To control polluted runoff from both agricultural and urban sites. The grants are targeted at high-priority resource problems.

Eligibility: Available to local units of government, special purpose districts (i.e., school or stormwater utility districts), tribal commissions, and regional planning agencies.

Contract: Governmental units granted 70% of eligible costs for various (urban or rural) Best Management Practices (BMPs), up to a cap of \$150,000. Property purchases (from willing sellers only) granted at 50% of DNR-approved appraised value, to be included in the \$150,000 grant cap. Rural easements are funded at 75% of DNR-appraised value, to be included in \$150,000 grant cap. Units of government hold grant agreement (contract) with DNR. For rural BMPs (i.e., barnyard relocation, manure storage), units of government (county land conservation departments) hold contract on behalf of county resident. Funds disbursed on a reimbursement basis at completion of project per two-year grant contract terms. Applications on Web site in January 2006 and must be postmarked by April 15, 2006 (see link below).

Public Access: May or may not be required, depending upon the type of funding given in the grant. This is not applicable to BMPs such as manure storage grants. If for an easement or property purchase, public access to “the waters of the state” will be required.

Contact: LCD, DNR Regional Nonpoint Coordinator, DNR-Runoff Management Grant Coordinator

Web site: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/wm/nps/financial.htm>

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

Purpose: To restore wetlands previously altered for agricultural use.

Practices: Wetland restoration and wildlife habitat establishment and protection.

Eligibility: Most private wetlands converted to agricultural use prior to 1985 are eligible.

Wetland must be restorable and suitable for wildlife benefits. WRP is a competitive program with the most environmentally beneficial sites selected for restoration.

Contract: Landowners may restore wetlands with permanent or 30-year easements or 10-year contracts. Permanent or 30-year easements are recorded with property deed. 10-year contract is not recorded with deed.

Public Access: Not required.

Contact: NRCS

Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claim Program

Purpose: To provide abatement and claim assistance to landowners receiving wildlife damage.

Practices: Fencing, shooting permits, cannons, culver traps, etc.

Eligibility: Assistance provided to landowners or cropowners receiving damage by deer, bears, elk, geese or turkeys to commercial seedlings, orchard trees, crops on agricultural land, damage to harvested crops, nursery stock, apiaries or livestock.

Contract: Fence contracts and enrollment agreement required.

Public Access: Hunting access for the species causing damage must be allowed.

Contact: LCD, USDA-WS, DNR

Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)

Purpose: To develop or improve fish and wildlife habitat.

Practices: Prairie and savannah restoration and establishment, fencing, in-stream fish structures, livestock exclusion, etc.

Eligibility: All private land is eligible unless it is currently enrolled in CRP, WPR, or a similar program.

Contract: Agree to maintain practices for a minimum of 5-10 years. Cost-share assistance is available for installation of conservation practices. Up to 75% of restoration costs, to a maximum of \$10,000. Producer assists with installation costs, and other organizations may provide additional cost-share money.

Public Access: Not required.

Note: A wildlife habitat development plan is **required**.

Contact: NRCS

Forestry Programs

Managed Forest Law (MFL)

Purpose: To promote good forest management through property tax incentives/reduction.

Practices: As required by an approved forest management plan. The management plan is free.

Eligibility: Landowner with a minimum of 10 contiguous acres (80% must be capable of producing merchantable timber).

Contract: 25 or 50 years, transferable to new owner for a small fee.

Public Access: Open lands must allow non-motorized recreation. Up to 80 acres may be closed to public access by the landowner.

Note: 5% yield tax applied to any wood products harvested. Based on rates in effect.

Contact: DNR

Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program (WFLGP)

Purpose: To assist private landowners in protecting and enhancing their forested lands, prairies and waters.

Description: Program allows qualified landowners to be reimbursed up to 50% of the cost of eligible practices.

Practices: Forest Stewardship plan development, reforestation, timber stand improvement, fish and wildlife habitat enhancement, fire hazard reduction, invasive species control, watershed protection and wetland restoration.

Eligibility: Practice must be identified in the landowner's Forest Stewardship plan or MFL management plan (except if applying for plan development) to be eligible for cost-sharing. Landowners are required to contact their DNR forester for guidance prior to submitting the application.

Contract: Must receive written approval from the DNR before beginning a practice or ineligible for funding.

Public Access: Not required.

Contact: DNR Forestry, NRCS, LCD

This publication was updated in cooperation with our partners in the Wisconsin Interagency Conservation Working Group. The ICWG's mission is to facilitate communication and coordination for jointly identifying, addressing and recommending solutions for issues facing Wisconsin conservation partners in order to maximize resources and strengthen conservation efforts. ICWG members include DATCP, DNR, FSA, NRCS, UWEX and WLWCA.

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| DATCP | Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection |
| DNR | Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources |
| FSA | USDA Farm Service Agency |
| FWS | USDI Fish and Wildlife Service |
| LCD | County Land Conservation Department |
| NRCS | USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service |
| USDA | United State Department of Agriculture |
| USDI | United States Department of Interior |
| UWEX | University of Wisconsin-Extension |
| WLWCA | Wisconsin Land & Water Conservation Association |
| WS | USDA Wildlife Services |
| ZO | County Zoning Office |

All programs of the USDA and State of Wisconsin are available on a non-discriminatory basis.